5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

aims and desires in their activities and show a sense of purpose and sustained effort. Food, for example, is one of the dominant interests of Tale children. In 1936 the ground-nut crop surpassed all anticipations in some districts. An elder, referring to this in conversation a week or two before the crop was harvested, said: 'We have a surfeit of ground-nuts this year. Look at the children. They don't care about their mothers, they don't care about their fathers.' When food is scarce, he explained, children are for ever running in to their mothers clamouring for something to eat. Now they are out all day, and if they feel hungry they simply pull up a handful of ground-nuts to chew and are satisfied. Food, indeed, remains one of the dominant interests of a Talǝŋa from childhood to old age, and with the confluence of other interests and motives has a great effect on Tale economic life. Between the ages of 6 and 14 the interest of boys in food becomes linked up with other interests which have been developing during that period, e.g. in learning to use the bow and arrow, in the comradeship of boys of about the same size, in primary economic and technical processes such as herding and hoeing, in exploring the environs of the settlement, and so forth. Thus, a group of boys out herding cattle often have their bows and arrows with them, and when the cattle are grazing quietly they will search around for cane rats or birds to shoot as titbits.

From a very early age—before they can walk or talk—until adulthood children show a marked and explicit interest in the activities of their parents and older siblings and other adults with whom they come in contact. This is due, in part, to the unity of the social sphere. The children thus begin to adopt the cultural values of their society in infancy, as has been indicated above in our discussion of the social sphere. It may, however, be worth while repeating that children express a keen interest in farming, in livestock, in ceremonies, dances and recreations, and in the conspicuous current activities of their households, in their kinship relationships, and so forth, from the age of 3 upwards, long before they can actively participate in these affairs. But it is shown quite clearly in their attitudes when they are allowed to be present at adult activities, and in their fantasies as revealed in their talk and play, which revolve round the themes of adult social life.

Another group of interests significant for the educational development of Tale children is connected with their habitat. By the age of

5: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937)1938 FE11 Tallensi FE11

88 9 or 10 the children are thoroughly familiar with the ecological environ-
861 ment of their clan settlements. They know the economically important trees, grasses, and herbs, e.g., a girl of about 9 once named and showed me nine varieties of herbs used for making soup. They have a fair idea of the gross anatomy of the fowl, small field animals, and larger live stock. But apart from these achievements which lead one to infer the existence of an interest in the natural environment, I was able to obtain some direct evidence thereof. The natives say that small children frequently ask questions about people and things they see around them. However, listening to children's talk for 'why' questions,[1] I was surprised to note how rarely they occurred; and the few instances I recorded refer to objects or persons foreign to the normal routine of Tale life. It would seem that Tale children rarely have to ask 'why' in regard to the people and things of their normal environment because so much of their learning occurs in real situations where explanation is generally coupled with instruction, and because they hear so much adult discussion, in terms of cause and effect, as these are understood by the Tallensi, of the things they are interested in. Yet two examples will prove that even quite small children react with exploratory interest to what is new and unusual. I gave some tiny tin figures of animals to a group of small children to play with. A little boy of about 5 looked intently at the figure of a horse. 'Why does he stoop like that?' he asked, speaking to himself rather than to his companions. But immediately he answered his own question, 'He is eating grass.' On another occasion I observed the 3-year-old son of our cook, pointing to the garbage tin, ask the horseboy: 'Why has that got a lid?'

857 Again, making clay figures is a favourite diversion of small boys
177 and adolescents. The standard figures are men and women, cows and
532 horses. But a youngster of about 9 or 10 once produced a motor-cycle, explaining that he had recently seen the Agricultural Officer arrive on one. Another boy, a little older, once made a roan antelope, explaining that some two years previously he had seen one of these animals which, fleeing from a hunting party, had entered the settlement and been surrounded and killed there.

128 I have not attempted to give an exhaustive account of the interests

[1] See N. Isaacs in *Intellectual Growth of Young Children*.